

What is claimed is:

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2 *P1* 1. A factory automation system for providing status information on at least
3 one factory automation component, comprising:
4 a factory automation component distributed by a first party;
5 the component residing at a site location of a second party; and
6 the component periodically communicating status information to the first party
7 wherein the first party compiles the status information from the component and utilizes
the status information to the benefit of the second party.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first party is a vendor and/or service
supplier of the component.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the second party is a purchaser of the
component and the site location is a factory of the purchaser where the component
resides.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the component communicates component
health information to the first party from the location site of the second party.

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P2 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the health information is selected from the
group consisting of a component failure, a component degradation and a component out
of calibration.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein the site of the first party communicates
patch information to the component in response to health information from the
component.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the component communicates version information to the server site of the first party from the location site of the second party.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the server site of the first party communicates version upgrade information to the component in response to version information from the component that does not correspond to the latest version.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the server site of the first party transmits a signal to the component in response to status information from the component that initiates an action by the component.

10. An Internet business communication system, including:
a website adapted to be employed by a vendor for receiving factory automation component status information over the Internet from a plurality of factory components residing at one or more customer sites, each component having a different IP address, the website matching component information residing at the vendor's website with the IP address of the component and providing this information to the vendor.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the status information includes the components health information, such that the vendor can communicate to a customer that one of the plurality of components in the one or more customer sites require attention by the customer.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein the status information includes the components version information, such that the facilitator can communicate to a customer that one of the plurality of components in the one or more customer sites require a version update.

13. The system of claim 10, wherein the status information includes customer identification information, customer site information and the component location within the customer's site.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein the component information includes customer identification information, customer site information and the component location within the customer's site.

15. The system of claim 10, wherein the status information includes component health information and the website can communicate patch information to at least one of the plurality of components in response to component health information.

16. The system of claim 10, wherein the status information includes the component version information, such that the website can communicate version upgrade information to at least one of the plurality of components in response to component version information.

17. The system of claim 10, wherein the website transmits a signal to the to at least one of the plurality of components in response to status information from the component that initiates an action to the component.

18. A method of providing status information to a vendor on at least one factory automation component sold by the vendor to at least one customer, comprising the steps of:

- locating at least one component at a site of at least one customer;
- connecting the at least one component to a network connected to a server of the vendor;
- communicating periodically component status information from the at least one component to the server of the vendor;

9 searching a database located on the server of the vendor for customer
 10 identification information and component location information corresponding to the
 11 status information of the at least one component; and
 12 outputting the customer identification information and component status and
 13 location information to the vendor.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the status information includes an IP address associated with the component and the step of searching includes matching the customer identification information and component location information corresponding to the IP address included in the status information.

20. The method of claim 18, further including the step of communicating a signal to the at least one component from the server in response to the component status information that initiates an action to the at least one component.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein the server determines if the at least one component has enabled the at least one component to receive communication from the server.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the status information includes component health information of the at least one component.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the server communicates patch information to the component in response to health information from the component.

24. The method of claim 18, wherein the status information includes version information of the at least one component.

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25. The method of claim 24, wherein the server communicates version upgrade information to the at least one component in response to version information from the at least one component that does not correspond to the latest version.

1 26. An electronic signal adapted to be transmitted between at least one site of
2 a customer and a site of a vendor, comprising:
3 an algorithm for matching a customer and a customer site location of a factory
4 component with a factory automation component located at the site location of the
5 customer, the algorithm matching the customer and the component site location based on
6 an address of the component.

1 27. An electronic signal adapted to be transmitted between at least one site of
2 a customer and a site of a vendor, comprising:
3 a periodic status message provided by a factory automation component, the status
4 message including health information relating to the factory automation component, the
5 factory automation component having an IP address.

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28. The signal of claim 27, wherein the site of the vendor is a website which matches the IP address of the component with customer identification information and component location information.

1 29. An Internet business communication system, including:
2 means for matching a factory automated component location and customer
3 identification information with status information provided by the factory automated
4 component over the Internet, the status information including information relating to the
5 health of the component wherein the component is located at a site location of a customer
6 and communicates status information to a site of a vendor.

1 30. A factory automated component, comprising:

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2 a processor;
 3 a memory coupled to the processor; and
 4 a network interface coupled to the processor for transmitting and receiving data
 5 with at least one remote computer system, wherein the factory component communicates
 6 status information periodically to the at least one remote computer system.

31. The component of claim 30, wherein the status information includes health information related to the health of the component.

32. The component of claim 30, wherein the status information includes version information related to the version of the component.

33. The component of claim 30, wherein the component includes an enabled mode for receiving communication from the at least one computer and a disabled mode blocking communication from at least one computer.

34. A system for monitoring factory automated components electronically, comprising:

a central server adapted to receive status information from one or more factory automated components located at one or more customer sites, the central server being located at a site of a vendor, wherein the server is configured to match component status information to customer identification information and component location information of the one or more factory automated components and output this information to the vendor.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the status information includes the components version information, such that the server can communicate to a customer that one or more components require a version update.

36. The system of claim 34, wherein the server transmits a signal to the one or more components *via* the at least one remote computer in response to status information from the component that initiates an action to the component.

37. The system of claim 34, wherein the server hosts a website of the vendor and the server matches the component status information with the customer identification information and component location information by using an IP address associated with the component.

38. The system of claim 35, wherein the status information includes the components health information, such that the vendor can communicate to a customer that the one or more components in the one or more customer sites require attention by the customer.

39. A system for providing status information to a vendor on at least one factory automation component sold by the vendor to at least one customer, comprising:

- means locating at least one component at a site of at least one customer;
- means for connecting the at least one component to a network connected to a server of the vendor;
- means for communicating periodically component status information from the at least one component to the server of the vendor;
- means for searching a database located on the server of the vendor for customer identification information and component location information corresponding to the status information of the at least one component; and
- means for outputting the customer identification information and component status and location information to the vendor.